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ON THE SAFETY OF BELIEVING TOO MUCH.

THERE is a silly argument in much favour with some persons, that it is the part of discretion to profess the doctrines of orthodoxy, because, say they, it is safer to believe too much than too little. If these doctrines are true, they who reject them are in a dangerous error. If false, the orthodox are to be sure in an error, but not in a dangerous one.

We do not enter into the views of those who think something else as good as the truth. We do not conceive of a safe belief, as a thing capable of being subjected to the measures of quantity. We do not see that the terms, *too much* or *too little*, are in any way applicable to it. Whatever is more or less than truth, is falsehood. Is it safe to believe what is false in a case where belief has a practical influence? Is it prudent to set our minds at rest, because we believe either the truth or something more, when *something more* necessarily means, *something different*?

We think Balaam spoke wisely when he said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more;" and we think it becomes christians to take equal heed how they add any thing to, or take from, "the things which are written in this book." We are not at all persuaded of the safety of entertaining erroneous views of a subject which has to do with the conduct of life, e. g. the nature of God or of

duty, even if you can dignify your mistake by calling it something more than truth. If your friend promises to render you a service which will save you from bankruptcy, on your conforming to certain conditions, and you, in your affected admiration of his goodness, and real love of your own ease, neglect to perform these conditions, it will fare with you no better, if he keeps his word, than if you had had too little confidence in his friendship, and never had applied to him.

When one man is said to believe more than another, by what rule is his amount of faith measured? One standard is the number and comprehensiveness of the propositions he believes. Now to believe many or unqualified propositions, is clearly no way to be safe, if some of the many are false, and some of the unqualified need to have qualifications made. It is no credit to the understanding to receive what is not true, and if it does this where *conduct* depends on its decisions, that conduct will be wrong. To say in this sense, that to believe much, is safe, would be of course to make all error, even religious unbelief, or assent to the most demoralizing doctrines, a harmless thing.

We do not mean to say, that any would justify the remark in this sense. We wish only to go over all the ground, by noticing each of the senses in which the phrase can be used. When one class of christians claims to believe more than another, they appear to mean one of two things. First, they seem to have an indefinite idea that they believe *more* of what is really found in scripture. But can it escape them that this is the very point at issue? We profess to believe *all* that scripture teaches. They, on their part, assert we do not. We, on ours, contend, that what they call scriptural truth, is human error. While this argument is pending, they stand on the ground, that their belief is the truth. They cannot, to shew their safety in believing *more* (as they think) than we, say that they believe *more* of *scripture truth*, for this is the very question in debate; and if they could prove it, their plea of safety then would be, not that what they believed was either the truth or something beyond it, but that what they believed was the truth itself.

But by this *believing much* is commonly meant, we suppose, believing what tasks the faith. He is held to have most faith who has made the greatest sacrifice of the common powers of belief; who has assented, in short, at the greatest cost of common sense. There is an idea swimming in mens' minds,—like the floating island of antiquity, now beneath, now above the surface,—that God is pleased with the surrender of the intellectual nature; and that in assenting to a proposition, which

we secretly believe would prove false if we had the temerity to examine it, a principle of religious obedience is shewn, and an acceptable service rendered. We have no such views of God, nor of truth. On the contrary, it seems to us, that the christian system and doctrines rest on a broad basis of evidence ;— ample evidence to determine a reasonable man on any other part of the conduct of life, as well as the religious. We think we see in this, that God approves the exercise of the understanding in the discovery of truth, and we say that those, with whom we argue, are reduced to this dilemma; either they think it a merit to believe that, which is at the same time repugnant to the reason and revealed in scripture, or else, they think it a merit of itself to believe what is repugnant to the reason, without reference to its being revealed or not. If they choose to stand by the first part of the alternative, we say, nothing repugnant to the reason is revealed in scripture, but on the contrary, the truths of revelation are such as an uncorrupted reason most warmly greets. Much that it could never have reached is revealed, but not the shadow of a sentiment which it rejects. Here then we are at issue; does revelation bring truths to light which reason is reluctant to receive? If not, of course there is no ground for the supposition of merit in receiving such. If so, those with whom we argue are right and safe indeed; but it is on the sure ground of believing what is true on the highest evidence, that of the divine declarations; not on the doubtful ground of believing that which taxes the credulity, and may be true or not.

But the other horn of the dilemma is sharper yet. If it is a merit to believe what the understanding relucts from, where will you set the limit of an innocent credulity? If you can believe this, you are ready for the atrocities of a bloody or sensual worship, for the impurity of Mahometanism, or the idolatry of the worshippers of the Lama.

We said, in the beginning of these remarks, that we acknowledge no applicability of the terms *more* or *less* to a saving faith. It seems scarcely necessary to say, that we did not mean that one man may not have a stronger, more efficacious, faith than another, because this has no connexion with the subject; it is not alluded to in the plea for indolence which we are examining. We mean, that doctrines are not valuable or safe because they are *many* or *mysterious*, but because they are *true*. Believing more or less is a thing of no moment. It is believing right or wrong. In many cases, it would be hard to affix a sense to the words, which would not violate the uses of language. One

man believes that God is one person, another that he is three. One believes that he is just and merciful ; another holds the doctrine of reprobation. In what sense does one believe more than another, except, by *more*, be meant *more incredible* ?

One further remark. To feel one's self safe, because one is satisfied that he either believes what God has revealed, or more, what is it but to say that if he is not acquainted with God's truth, he is acquainted with some equally good method of salvation ? It would be difficult to throw more contempt on the gospel revelation, than is done by this ; by saying that we feel secure, because if we are not acquainted with the method of salvation which divine wisdom has adopted, we are acquainted with one as good. Let a man, who quiets his conscience by the argument we have been combating, consider this.—Whatever system of doctrine it be which is revealed in the gospel, we have the warrant of divine wisdom for believing, that that and no other, is the best means of bringing men to holiness and Heaven. That and no other, it is the bounden duty of every christian to search after, and his unspeakable interest to learn. Let men once suppose that they are released from the duty of inquiring for it, because they think they are already possessed of it, or of something equivalent, and there is no end to the delusions which may follow. The truth itself is the thing to be known. It will be an idle excuse, that we thought any form of error would fill its place, whether the error of unbelief or credulity.

OBJECTIONS TO UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED.

It is due to truth, and a just deference to our fellow christians, to take notice of objections which are currently made to our particular views of religion ; nor ought we to dismiss such objections, as unworthy of attention, on account of their supposed lightness ; because what is light to us, may weigh much with our neighbour, and truth may suffer from obstructions which a few explanations might remove. It is to be feared that those christians, who are called Unitarian, have been wanting in this duty. Whilst they have met the laboured arguments of their opponents fully and fairly, they have overlooked the loose, vague, indefinite objections, which float through the community, and operate more on common minds than formal reasoning. On some of these objections, remarks will now be offered ; and it is hoped that our plainness of speech will not be construed

into severity, or our strictures on different systems be ascribed to a desire of retaliation. It cannot be expected, that we shall repel with indifference, what seem to us reproaches on some of the most important and consoling views of christianity. Believing that the truths, which through God's good providence we are called to maintain, are necessary to the vindication of the divine character, and to the prevalence of a more enlightened and exalted piety, we are bound to assert them earnestly, and to speak freely of the opposite errors which now disfigure christianity. We trust, however, that when it is remembered, with what language and feelings our views are assailed, we shall not be thought unwarrantably warm in their defence.—What then are the principal objections to Unitarian Christianity?

1. It is objected to us, that we deny *the divinity of Jesus Christ*. Now what does this objection mean? What are we to understand by *the divinity of Christ*? In the sense in which many christians, and perhaps a majority, interpret it, we do not deny it, but believe it as firmly as themselves. We believe firmly in the *divinity* of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with *divine* authority, and was a bright image of the *divine* perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting; in his character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe, then, in the *divinity of Christ*, as this term is often and properly used. How then, it may be asked, do we differ from other christians? We differ in this important respect. Whilst we honour Christ as the Son, representative, and image of the supreme God, *we do not believe him to be the supreme God himself*. We maintain, that Christ and God are *distinct beings, two beings*, not one and the same being. On this point a little repetition may be pardoned, for many good christians, after the controversies of ages, misunderstand the precise difference between us and themselves. Trinitarianism teaches, that Jesus Christ is the supreme and infinite God, and that he and his Father are not only one in affection, counsel and will, but are strictly and literally *one and the same being*. Now to us this doctrine is most

unscriptural and irrational. We say that the Son cannot be the same being with his own Father, that he, who was sent into the world to save it, cannot be the living God who sent him. The language of Jesus is explicit and unqualified. "I came not to do mine own will." "I came not from myself." "I came from God." Now we affirm, and this is our chief heresy, that Jesus was not and could not be *the God from whom he came*, but was another being; and it amazes us, that any can resist this simple truth. The doctrine, that Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem; who ate and drank and slept; who suffered and was crucified; who came from God; who prayed to God; who did God's will; and who said, on leaving the world, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" the doctrine, that this Jesus was the supreme God himself, and the same being with his Father, this seems to us a contradiction to reason and scripture so flagrant, that the simple statement of it is a sufficient refutation. We are often charged with degrading Christ; but if this reproach belong to any christians, it falls, we fear, on those who accuse him of teaching a doctrine so contradictory, and so subversive of the supremacy of our Heavenly Father. Certainly our humble and devout Master has given no ground for this accusation. He always expressed towards God the reverence of a son. He habitually distinguished himself from God. He referred to God all his powers. He said, without limitation or reserve, "The Father is greater than I." "Of myself I can do nothing." If to represent Christ as a being distinct from God, and as inferior to him, be to *degrade* him, then let our opponents lay the guilt, where it belongs, not on *us*, but on our master, whose language we borrow, in whose very words we express our sentiments, whose words we dare not trifle with and force from their plain sense. Our limits will not allow us to say more; but we ask common christians, who have taken their opinions from the Bible rather than from human systems, to look honestly into their own minds, and to answer frankly, whether they have not understood and believed Christ's divinity, in the sense maintained by us, rather than in that for which Trinitarians contend.

2. I proceed to another objection, and one which probably weighs more with multitudes than any other. It is this, that our doctrine respecting Christ *takes from the sinner the only ground of hope*. It is said continually by our opponents, "We and all men are sinners by our very nature, and infinitely guilty before God. The sword of divine justice hangs over us, and hell opens beneath us; and where shall we

find a refuge, but in an infinite Saviour? We want an *infinite atonement*; and in depriving us of this, you rob us of our hope, you tear from the scriptures the only doctrine which meets our wants. We may burn our bibles, if your interpretation be true, for our case is desperate; we are lost forever." In such warm and wild language, altogether unwarranted by scripture, yet exceedingly fitted to work on common and terror-stricken minds, our doctrine is constantly assailed.

Now to this declamation, for such we esteem it, we oppose one plain request. Show us, we say, a *single* passage in the Bible in which we are told, that the sin of man is infinite, and needs an infinite atonement. We find *not one*. Not even a whisper of this doctrine comes to us from the sacred writers. Let us stop a moment and weigh this doctrine. It teaches us, that man, although created by God a frail, erring, and imperfect being, and even created with an irresistible propensity to sin, is yet regarded by his Creator as an *infinite offender*, meriting *infinite punishment* for his earliest transgressions; and that he is doomed to *endless torment*, unless an infinite Saviour appear for his rescue. And what man, we ask, has the courage to charge on our benevolent and righteous Parent, this merciless and iniquitous government of his creatures. Tell us not that Unitarianism cuts off the sinner's hope; for if God be what this system teaches, we see no hope for saint or sinner, for men or angels. Under such a sovereign every one's prospects grow black; every heart may well shudder.—We maintain, that man is not created in a condition which makes an infinite atonement necessary; nor do we believe that any creature can fall into a condition, from which God may not deliver him without this rigid expedient. Surely, if an infinite satisfaction to justice were indispensable to our salvation, if God took on him human nature for the very purpose of offering it, and if this fact constitute the peculiar glory, the life and essence, and the saving efficacy of the gospel, we must find it expressed clearly, definitely, in at least one passage in the Bible. But not one, we repeat it, can be found there.—We maintain farther, that this doctrine of God becoming a victim and sacrifice for his own rebellious subjects, is as irrational as it is unscriptural. We have always supposed that atonement, if necessary, was to be made *to*, not *by*, the sovereign, who has been offended; and we cannot conceive a more unlikely method of vindicating his authority, than that he himself should bear the punishment which is due to transgressors of his laws. We have another objection. If an infinite atonement be necessary, and if, consequently, none but God can make it, we see not but that God

tion, we beg to know what is intended by morality. Are we to understand by it, what it properly signifies, *our whole duty*, however made known to us, whether by nature or revelation? Does it mean the whole extent of those obligations which belong to us as moral beings? Does it mean that "sober, righteous, godly life," which our moral Governour has prescribed to us by his Son, as the great preparation for Heaven? If this be morality, we cheerfully plead guilty to the charge of preaching it, and of labouring chiefly and constantly to enforce it; and believing, as we do, that all the doctrines, precepts, threatenings, and promises, of the gospel, are revealed for no other end than to make men *moral*, in this true and generous sense, we hope to continue to merit this reproach.

We fear, however, that this is not the meaning of the morality, which is said to be the burden of our preaching. Some, at least, who thus reproach us, mean, that we are accustomed to enjoin only a *worldly* and *social morality*, consisting in common honesty, common kindness, and freedom from gross vices; neglecting to inculcate inward purity, devotion, heavenly mindedness, and love to Jesus Christ. We hope that the persons, who thus accuse us, speak from rumour, and have never heard our instructions for themselves; for the charge is false: and no one, who ever sat under our ministry, can urge it, without branding himself a slanderer. The first and great commandment, which is to love God supremely, is recognized and enforced habitually in our preaching; and our obligations to Jesus Christ, the friend who died for us, are urged, we hope, not wholly without tenderness and effect.

It is but justice, however, to observe of many, that when they reproach us with *moral preaching*, they do not mean that we teach only outward decencies, but that we do not inculcate certain favourite doctrines, which are to them the very marrow and richness of the gospel. When such persons hear a sermon, be the subject what it may, which is not seasoned with recognitions of the trinity, total depravity, and similar articles of faith, they call it *moral*. According to this strange and unwarrantable use of the term, we rejoice to say that we are "moral preachers;" and it comforts us that we have for our pattern, "Him, who spake as never man spake," and who, in his longest discourse, has dropt not a word about a Trinity or inborn corruption, and special and electing grace; and still more, we seriously doubt, whether our preaching could with propriety be called *moral*, did we urge these doctrines, especially the two last; for, however hotly they may be defended by honest men, they seem to us to border on *immorality*; that is, to dishonour

God, to weaken the sense of responsibility, to break the spirit, and to loosen the restraints on guilty passion.

5. Another objection urged against us, is, that our system does not produce as much *zeal*, *seriousness*, and *piety* as other views of religion. This objection it is difficult to repel, except by language which will seem to be a boasting of ourselves. When expressed in plain language, it amounts to this—"We Trinitarians and Calvinists are better and more pious than you Unitarians, and consequently our system is more scriptural than yours." Now assertions of this kind do not strike us as very modest and humble, and we believe, that truth does not require us to defend it by setting up our piety above that of our neighbours.—This, however, we would say, that if our zeal and devotion are faint, the fault is our own, not that of our doctrine. We are sure that our views of the Supreme Being are incomparably more affecting and attractive, than those which we oppose. It is the great excellence of our system, that it exalts God, vindicates his paternal attributes, and appeals powerfully to the ingenuous principles of love, gratitude and veneration; and when we compare it with the doctrines which are spread around us, which make God a despot, and religion an offering of abject fear, we feel that of all men we are most inexcusable, if a filial piety do not spring up and grow strong in our hearts.

Perhaps it may not be difficult to suggest some causes for the charge, that our views do not favour seriousness and zeal. One reason probably is, that we interpret with much rigour those precepts of Christ, which forbid ostentation, and enjoin modesty and retirement in devotion. We dread a showy religion. We are disgusted with pretensions to superior sanctity, that stale and vulgar way of building up a sect. We believe that true religion speaks in actions more than in words, and manifests itself chiefly in the common temper and life; in giving up the passions to God's authority, in inflexible uprightness and truth, in active and modest charity, in candid judgment, and in patience under trials and injuries. We think it no part of piety to publish its fervours, but prefer a delicacy in regard to these secrets of the soul; and hence, to those persons, who think that religion is to be worn conspicuously and spoken of passionately, we may seem cold and dead, when, perhaps, were the heart uncovered, it might be seen to be "alive to God," as truly as their own.

Again, it is one of our principles, flowing necessarily from our views of God, that religion is *cheerful*; that where its natural tendency is not obstructed by false theology, or a gloomy temperament, it opens the heart to every pure and innocent

pleasure. We do not think, that piety disfigures its face, or wraps itself in a funeral pall as its appropriate garb. Now too many conceive of religion as something solemn, sad, and never to be named but with an altered tone and countenance; and where they miss these imagined signs of piety, they can hardly believe that a sense of God dwells in the heart.

Another cause of the error in question, we believe to be this. Our religious system absolutely excludes those overwhelming terrors and transports, and those sudden changes of the character, which many think essential to piety. We do not believe in shaking and disordering men's understandings by excessive fear, as a preparation for supernatural grace and immediate conversion. This we regard as a dreadful corruption and degradation of religion. Religion, we believe, is a gradual and rational work, beginning ordinarily in education, confirmed by reflexion, growing by the regular use of Christian means, and advancing silently to perfection. Now, because we specify no time when we were overpowered and created anew by irresistible impulse; because we relate no agonies of despair succeeded by miraculous light and joy, we are thought by some to be strangers to piety—how reasonably let the judicious determine.

Once more; we are thought to want zeal, because our principles forbid us to use many methods for spreading them, which are common with other Christians. Whilst we value highly our peculiar views, and look to them for the best fruits of piety, we still consider ourselves as bound to think charitably of those who doubt or deny them; and with this conviction, we cannot enforce them with that vehemence, positiveness, and style of menace, which constitute much of the zeal of certain denominations,—and we freely confess, that we would on no account exchange *our* charity for their *zeal*; and we trust that the time is near, when he, who holds what he deems truth with lenity and forbearance, will be accounted *more pious* than he who compasses sea and land to make proselytes to his sect, and “shuts the gates of mercy” on all who will not bow their understandings to his creed.—We fear, that in these remarks we may have been unconsciously betrayed into a self-exalting spirit. Nothing could have drawn them from us, but the fact, that a very common method of opposing our sentiments is to decry the piety of those who adopt them. After all, we mean not to deny our great deficiencies. We have nothing to boast before God, although the cause of truth forbids us to submit to the censoriousness of our brethren.

6. Another objection to our views, is, that they *lead to a rejection of revelation*. Unitarianism has been pleasantly called "a half-way house to infidelity." Now to this objection we need not oppose general reasonings. We will state a plain fact. It is this. A large proportion of the most able and illustrious defenders of the truth of Christianity have been Unitarians; and our religion has received from them, to say the least, as important service in its conflicts with infidelity, as from any class of Christians whatever. From the long catalogue of advocates of Christianity among Unitarians, we can select now but a few; but these few are a host.—The name of John Locke is familiar to every scholar. He is revered as the father of the true philosophy of the human mind; nor is this his highest praise. His writings on government and toleration contributed, more than those of any other individual, to the diffusion of free and generous sentiments through Europe and America; and perhaps Bishop Watson has not greatly exaggerated, when he says, "This great man has done more for the establishment of pure Christianity than any author I am acquainted with." He was a laborious and successful student of the scriptures. His works on the "Epistles of Paul," and on the "Reasonableness of Christianity," formed an era in sacred literature; and he has the honour of having shed a new and bright light on the darkest parts of the New Testament, and in general on the Christian system. Now Locke, be it remembered, was a Unitarian.—We pass to another intellectual prodigy, to Newton, a name which every man of learning pronounces with reverence; for it reminds him of faculties so exalted above those of ordinary men, that they seem designed to help our conceptions of superior orders of being. This great man, who gained by intuition what others reap from laborious research, after exploring the laws of the universe, turned for light and hope to the Bible; and although his theological works cannot be compared with Locke's, yet in his illustrations of the prophecies and of scripture chronology, and in his criticisms on two doubtful passages,* which are among the chief supports of the doctrine of the Trinity, he is considered as having rendered valuable service to the Christian cause. Newton too was a Unitarian. We are not accustomed to boast of men, or to prop our faith by great names; for Christ and *He only* is our master; but it is with pleasure, that we find in our ranks the most gifted, sagacious, and exalted minds; and we cannot but smile, when we sometimes hear from men and

* 1 John v. 7.—1 Tim. iii. 16.

women of very limited culture, and with no advantages for enlarged inquiry, reproachful and contemptuous remarks on a doctrine, which the vast intelligence of Locke and Newton, after much study of the scriptures, and in opposition to a prejudiced and intolerant age, received as the truth of God. It is proper to state, that doubts have *lately* been raised as to the religious opinions of Locke and Newton, and for a very obvious reason. In these times of growing light, their names have been found too useful to the Unitarian cause. But the long and general belief of the Unitarianism of these illustrious men, can hardly be accounted for, but by admitting the fact; and we know of no serious attempts to set aside the proofs on which this belief is founded.

We pass to another writer, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the church of England and of the age in which he lived, Dr. Samuel Clarke. In classical literature and in metaphysical speculation, Dr. Clarke has a reputation which needs no tribute at our hands. His sermons are an invaluable repository of scriptural criticism; and his work on the evidences of natural and revealed religion, has ever been considered as one of the ablest vindications of our common faith. This great man was a Unitarian. He believed firmly that Jesus was a distinct being from his Father, and a derived and dependent being; and he desired to bring the liturgy of his church into a correspondence with these doctrines.

To those who are acquainted with the memorable infidel controversy in the early part of the last century, excited by the writings of Bolingbroke, Tindal, Morgan, Collins, and Chubb, it will be unnecessary to speak of the zeal and power with which the Christian cause was maintained by learned Unitarians. But we must pass over these to recal a man, whose memory is precious to enlightened believers; we mean Lardner, that most patient and successful advocate of Christianity; who has written, we believe, more largely than any other author, on the evidences of the gospel; from whose works later authors have drawn as from a treasure house; and whose purity and mildness have disarmed the severity and conciliated the respect of men, of very different views from his own. Lardner was a Unitarian.—Next to Lardner, the most laborious advocate of Christianity against the attacks of infidels, in our own day, was Priestley; and whatever we may think of some of his opinions, we believe that none of his opposers ever questioned the importance of his vindications of our common faith. To these we might, perhaps, add another distinguished

name. Paley has no where declared himself a Unitarian. But in his writings we find no traces of Trinitarianism; and the uniform impression which his works have left on our minds, is, that he considered Christ as a distinct being from his Father, and a derived and subordinate being.—We certainly do not say too much, when we affirm, that Unitarians have not been surpassed by any denomination in zealous substantial service to the Christian cause. Yet we are told, that Unitarianism leads to infidelity. We are reproached with defection from that religion, round which we have gathered in the day of its danger, and from which, we trust, persecution and death cannot divorce us.

It is indeed said, that instances have occurred of persons, who, having given up the Trinitarian doctrine, have not stopt there, but have resigned one part of Christianity after another, until they have become thorough infidels. To this we answer, that such instances we have never known; but that such should occur is not improbable, and is what we even should expect; for it is natural, that when the mind has detected one error in its creed, it should distrust every other article, and should exchange its blind and hereditary assent for a sweeping scepticism. We have examples of this truth at the present moment, both in France and Spain, where multitudes have proceeded from rejecting Popery to absolute Atheism. Now who of us will argue, that the Catholick faith is true, because multitudes who relinquished it, have also cast away every religious principle and restraint; and if the argument be not sound on the side of Popery, how can it be pressed into the service of Trinitarianism? The fact is, that false and absurd doctrines, when exposed, have a natural tendency to beget scepticism in those who received them without reflection. None are so likely to believe *too little* as those who have begun with believing *too much*; and hence we charge upon Trinitarianism whatever tendency may exist in those who forsake it, to sink gradually into infidelity.

Unitarianism does not lead to infidelity. On the contrary, its excellence is, that it fortifies faith. Unitarianism is Christianity stripped of those corrupt additions, which shock reason and our moral feelings. It is a rational and amiable system, against which no man's understanding or conscience or charity or piety revolts. Can the same be said of that system, which teaches the doctrines of three equal persons in one God, of natural and total depravity, of infinite atonement, of special and electing grace, and of the everlasting misery of the non-elected part of mankind. We believe that unless Christianity be purified from these corruptions, it will not be able to bear the unsparing

scrutiny to which the progress of society is exposing it. We believe that it must be reformed, or intelligent men will abandon it. As the friends of Christianity, and the foes of infidelity, we are therefore solicitous to diffuse, what seem to us nobler and juster views of this divine system.

It was our purpose to consider one more objection to our views, viz. that they give no consolation in sickness and death. But we have only time to express amazement at such a charge. What! A system, which insists with a peculiar energy on the pardoning mercy of God, on his universal and parental love, and on the doctrine of a resurrection and immortality, such a system unable to give comfort? It unlocks infinite springs of consolation and joy, and gives to him who practically receives it, a living, overflowing, and unspeakable hope. Its power to sustain the soul in death has been often tried; and did we believe dying men to be inspired, or that peace and hope in the last hours were God's seal to the truth of doctrines, we should be able to settle at once the controversy about Unitarianism. A striking example of the power of this system in disarming death, was lately given by a young minister in a neighbouring town,* known to many of our readers, and singularly endeared to his friends by eminent Christian virtue. He was smitten with sickness in the midst of a useful and happy life, and sunk slowly to the grave. His religion, and it was that which has now been defended, gave habitual peace to his mind, and spread a sweet smile over his pale countenance. He retained his faculties to his last hour; and when death came, having left pious counsel to the younger members of his family, and expressions of gratitude to his parents, he breathed out life, in the language of Jesus, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Such was the end of one, who held, with an unwavering faith, the great principles which we have here advanced; and yet our doctrine has no consolation, we are told, for sickness and death!

We have thus endeavoured to meet the objections which are commonly urged against our views of religion; and we have done this, not to build up a party, but to promote views of Christianity, which seem to us particularly suited to strengthen men's faith in it, and to make it fruitful of good works and holy lives. Christian virtue, Christian holiness, Love to God and man, these are all which we think worth contending for; and these we believe to be intimately connected with the system now maintained. If in this we err, may God discover our

* Rev. John E. Abbot, of Salem.

error and disappoint our efforts.—We ask no success, but what He may approve—no proselytes, but such as will be improved and rendered happier by the adoption of our views.

ON BOOKS OF DEVOTION.

Books of Devotion exert an influence over the religious world more extensive and more powerful, we believe, than is generally supposed. Other books are read but by few, and have but little influence on the few that read them; and often, indeed, directly the opposite influence from what was intended. But this is not the case with books of devotion. All men read them, and all men *think* they understand them. They constitute the *whole* reading of many, and of course supply them with all their religious sentiments. They are also commonly addressed to the imagination and passions, and must therefore have a much greater effect than books addressed to the understanding. The subject too, on which these books treat, is one above all others interesting and engaging, and every thing which they contain must on this account come to the mind with greater weight. In addition to all this, the views and feelings of the writers of these books, strike us as being in the main highly commendable, and so much are we pleased with the earnestness and power with which they press on mankind the importance and necessity of devotion to God, that we are predisposed to admit whatever they may advance in this connexion; so much do we applaud their general purpose, that we unconsciously come into all their peculiarities, and adopt them as our own, without so much as once questioning their authority. Let the hints, which we have here thrown out, be duly considered, and we think that all must unite with us in believing, that books of devotion have more to do than any other books, in forming the opinions and moulding the character of religious men. Controversial and expository writings have done something, and there are times when they are peculiarly useful. But their influence is as nothing, compared with that of devotional works. Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted" has done more to propagate his peculiar sentiments, than all the rest of his five folio volumes; Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" has had more effect on the minds of men, an hundred times over, than his "Family Expositor;" and Allein's "Alarm" has made a thousand converts, where

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Edwards' and Emmons' metaphysical speculations have made, or ever will make, one.

Since then the actual influence of these books is so great, it is of the utmost importance that they should be of such a kind that their influence may also be good, purely good, without any mixture of evil. They may be made the mightiest of all engines to move the feelings and wield the prejudices of the world; and it is therefore so much the more necessary, that they should be employed exclusively on the side of humanity and truth. It is to be deeply regretted that this is not always the case. Numbers of them, we apprehend, are enlisted in the service of error and bad feelings, inculcating sentiments and breathing a spirit no where to be found in the gospel. There is too much reason to fear, that many of those books, purporting to be books of devotion, do little else but propagate wrong opinions and wrong dispositions, acting on the minds of men with a power as mischievous as it is extensive and lasting. Even those books, the leading object and general tenour of which are decidedly good, often have their consistency destroyed, and their good effect in a great measure prevented, by the occasional introduction of sentiments at which every enlightened christian must revolt. In almost every such instance, we have been sorry to see, that what is good does little but recommend what is bad in the publication; we mean, that the earnest spirit and pious design exhibited throughout such publications seem to answer no end, but the evil one of giving to the errors and absurdities they countenance a currency and popularity, which they would not otherwise have obtained. We are fully persuaded, that many of the opinions prevalent at the present day, and which we cannot but think to be both unscriptural and irrational, are indebted almost entirely to a few popular devotional works, for the strong hold they have gained on the affections of the people.

More might well be written on this point, for we do not think it has yet attracted sufficient attention from those, whose office and duty it is to expose and correct the errors and mistakes that may exist on the subject of religion. What has been said, however, we presume is enough to convince any one, that the influence of books of devotion may be as disastrous as it is general. They may be made to do much good, but they may also be made to do much evil. No books, therefore, should be watched with greater jealousy; none should be criticised with greater severity; and none should be selected and recommended with greater care. From the vast mass

of devotional works, of which many deserve no praise, none should be selected and recommended, but such as are pure in sentiment, catholic in spirit, and chaste in style ; for so long as those of a different description are circulated and approved, it is in vain to think of counteracting by any other means, the bad influence they will have on the minds of men.

As therefore it is of the utmost importance that books of devotion should be selected with judgment and care, we shall attempt to suggest a few of those rules by which we should be governed in making this selection. We are aware that by following these rules, many popular works, whose authority has almost superseded that of the Bible, will be rejected. But for the consequences of these rules, it will be recollected, we are not answerable. It is enough for us to show, that the rules themselves are founded in truth, and that they are such as men of sense and discernment must approve.

Our first rule, then, is, that we should discountenance such books of devotion as are calculated to give wrong ideas of the nature of devotion itself. Devotion is nothing else but practical piety. It consists in cherishing diligently and habitually the principles of true piety, and applying them to the regulation of the temper and the government of the life. This is devotion ; and a book, which recommends any thing else under the sanction of this name, ought to be discountenanced. We are aware that the writer of it may be animated by a sincere desire to do good—that he may be actuated by a zeal for what he deems to be religion ; still, however, we maintain that the book itself must have a dangerous tendency. By misleading us as to what constitutes a devout frame of mind, it must also mislead us as to what ought ever to be the subject of our prayers, and the object of our exertions, and give a wrong direction to all our religious principles. It must also dispose us to place an ill-grounded confidence in a spurious kind of devotion, which ought not so much as to be named with that which is genuine—leading us to aim at that alone, to rest contented with it, and to hold it, and build on it as a succedaneum for something better. Such works are liable to all the objections that can be brought against the doctrine of penance among the Catholics, which has substituted in the room of true christian self-denial, a multitude of unmeaning and profitless acts of self-mortification. All books, therefore, which, under the colour of recommending devotion, recommend what is not devotion, but something different and inferior, and often highly injurious—all such books as recommend devotion, making it however to consist, not in a steady frame of the affections, in which the man is led to

live and act under a constant sense of the divine character, presence and government, but in certain fervours of the imagination, certain transports of feeling, or, in short, in any excitement of the mind that is at the same time unnatural, unaccountable, and ungovernable—all such books, we think, should be avoided as dangerous; and we conceive it to be the solemn duty of every serious and enlightened christian, to discourage their circulation.

Another rule of importance to be observed in selecting good devotional works is, to be on our guard against those writers who seize every opportunity to insinuate their own peculiar and erroneous sentiments. Devotion does not depend on the peculiar doctrines of any sect. It does not result from any peculiar views of the christian scheme. But it grows up in the human mind from contemplating aright those great principles of religion, which are held in common by all believers. It springs from seriously considering that relation which we all admit Man bears to God—from considering the Supreme Being as our proprietor, governour, Father and friend.—These are the considerations to which all true devotion must ultimately be referred, and to these alone; and these are considerations, the justness of which no one can doubt, and the force of which no one will question. Yet it is the fault of most men, that they are apt to think more, and lay more stress, on those doctrines by which they are distinguished from others, than upon those in which all are agreed. Devotional writers especially, are ever prone to introduce and insist upon their own peculiar opinions, on every occasion which they can either find or make. Perhaps it is because they value religious truth more dearly; but certain it is, that in works professedly written for the sole purpose of inculcating devotion, many of them omit no opportunity to insinuate their own peculiar views as highly important, if not absolutely essential, to a devout frame of mind. It is true they do not undertake formally to defend the dogmas of their school; but, what is a great deal worse, they take them for granted; they assume them as incontestable truths—as undisputed principles, lying at the root of all religion. And in this light they are too apt to be viewed and admitted by the incautious and unsuspecting reader, without so much as once allowing himself to suppose it possible that they are unfounded. Thus it is that errors are propagated without end, and that, too, the more effectually, because propagated in connexion with some of the most impressive and affecting truths of religion, and united and blended with some of the deepest and holiest feelings of our

nature. Deeply, therefore, do we lament that so many of our most popular devotional works have proceeded from men—whose sincere and unaffected piety we love and venerate—but whose doctrines are so different from what we conceive the scriptures to teach. And of such works we acknowledge our fear is, that the good influence they might otherwise have on mankind, is in a considerable degree counteracted by the errors, which it is their direct and necessary tendency to disseminate.

A third rule to be regarded in selecting such devotional works as ought to be recommended, relates to the manner and spirit with which they are written. It is not difficult to notice a material difference among them when considered in this point of view. Some are written in a style that is chaste and manly, and others in one that is puerile and vulgar: some breathe a spirit that is mild and amiable, and others one that is gloomy and bitter: some are calculated at the same time to enlighten the mind and enlarge the heart, while others can only tend to flatter men's prejudices and inflame their passions. Such, in short, is the temper of some of these productions, that their immediate tendency must be to promote, and such the temper of others, that their immediate tendency must be to destroy, the influence of that heaven-born charity, which is the beginning and end, the alpha and omega, of every thing that is good among the children of one common Father. Here, then, there is vast room for discrimination, and vast need of it. The importance and necessity of this must be particularly felt at the present day, when a multitude of books of a devotional cast have been thrown upon the public, which do not seem to indicate in their authors those qualifications of mind, or in many instances, we are sorry to add, those qualifications of the heart, which are absolutely indispensable in a good devotional writer. We must be allowed to consider them, that is, many of them, as poor, and low, and paltry things, wholly unworthy of favour or respect. We fear they are doing much to take from piety its respectability, and to make devotion itself only a term of derision. As therefore we wish for religion without cant, and for devotion without vulgarity, we conceive it to be incumbent on all, to read and to recommend only such devotional works, as to zeal add knowledge, to knowledge good feeling, and to good feeling a pure and dignified style.

These are the rules, upon this subject, which we think it most important to lay down. By observing them it will at once be perceived, that many books of devotion now in repute, must be exchanged for others of a far less exceptionable cha-

racter. This we conceive is an exchange devoutly to be wished; for we are deeply impressed with a conviction, that many of the present popular works on devotion, are such as to give us very defective views of the nature of religion, mislead us as to the way in which its graces are to be found, deceive us as to the true grounds of christian hope, and form in us characters, which will possess enough perhaps of seriousness and zeal, but be deficient in those chaste and manly virtues, that high tone of moral feeling, and those generous and exalted motives and aims, which ought preeminently to distinguish the follower of Jesus.

It cannot be supposed from the course of our remarks, that we would discourage the reading of *all* devotional works. On the contrary, we conceive them to be, next to the scriptures, the life and support of practical religion. They should be taught to children, to imbue their minds with early piety. They should be put into the hands of youth, that their characters may be formed in the school of Christ. Men engaged in active life should read them continually, that they may counteract the influence, which their worldly business might otherwise have, to contract their feelings, and corrupt their hearts. And it is to them, that the aged also should go for those supports and consolations, which religion only can give, gilding with the beams of the sun of righteousness the evening of their days. Indeed so fully are we persuaded of the utility and importance of devotional works—so entire is our conviction that they should be numbered among the most powerful of those religious excitements, by which the slumbers of the thoughtless are to be broken, and the consciences of the vicious to be alarmed—that we cannot refrain from expressing our regret, that there are so few books of this description which we can recommend, without qualification. Some, however, there are, and it is also a subject of extreme regret, that these are not more generally known and read. Law's *Serious call to a devout and holy life*; Thomas a Kempis, *On the Imitation of Christ*; Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*; *Holy Living and Dying*, by Jeremy Taylor; and Hannah More's *Practical Piety*;—these are all works of acknowledged merit, and works which we can recommend with very little abatement of that praise, which Christians of all persuasions, have almost unanimously lavished upon them. What then shall we say of Mrs. Barbauld's *Hymns for Children*; Merivale's *Daily devotions for the Closet*; the *Devotional Discourses* of Newcome Cappe; and the *Sermons* of our late lamented Buckminster—books easily to be obtained—books

which deserve the highest praise ; and of which it would not be too much to say, they should always be found lying by the side of our Bibles, that we may recur to them continually, to deepen our religious impressions, to strengthen our holy resolutions, and to fill our minds with the consolations and hopes of religion. "By the frequent reading of such books," says Bishop Burnet, "by the relish that one has in them, by the delight they give, and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive whether his soul is made for divine matters or not ; what suitability there is between him and them, and whether he is yet touched with such a sense of religion as to be capable of dedicating himself to it."

If any of our readers have yet to make themselves acquainted with the books we have mentioned, we earnestly request them to do it without delay. By neglecting it they will do themselves and their families an injustice for which it may not be in their power to atone ; they may do themselves and their families an injury, which ages will not repair.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

GENTLEMEN,—It is very possible that you do not know with what religious abhorrence certain of your doctrines are regarded by orthodox believers ; or of what communion *they* are thought worthy "who privily bring in such damnable heresies." For your information in that particular, I send you the following extracts from the sermons of a distinguished Doctor of Divinity now living and preaching in the State of New York.

"The sentiment may be unpopular ; it may be branded as illiberal ; yet, supported by the word of God, I am emboldened to utter it, that the *Prince of darkness is as worthy of our communion and countenance, as the man who persists deliberately, wilfully, and avowedly, to deny the Deity of our Lord.*"

Again ;

"The finite mind cannot expand to conceive the complicated blasphemies which are necessarily involved in the denial of this doctrine." PROUDFIT'S Works, vol. i. p. 361.

C. J.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

SINCERITY.

“If the *show* of any thing, be good for any thing, I am sure *sincerity* is better ; for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to ? For to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way in the world to *seem* to be any thing, is *really to be* what he would seem to be. Besides that it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality, as to have it ; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it ; and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it, are lost.”

Letter to Bishop WATSON, from a young man who had read his Defence of Christianity.

SIR,—Unknown as I am to your Lordship, permit me to express my obligation for your labours in the cause of Christianity, and the benefit I in particular have derived from them—inestimable indeed.

Young and inexperienced, by the impious jests and contagious example of profligate associates, I at length abandoned the religious principles in which I had been early instructed, and with sorrow confess, imbibed those of infidelity. In this deplorable situation I met with your *Theological Tracts*, and *Apology for Christianity*. By a careful perusal of both, I am overpowered with evidence and conviction : so that with me the truth of our holy religion stands on a foundation infinitely firmer than that of any remote fact whatever ; it is the power of God unto salvation.

In consequence of this happy change, I hope I am solicitous to conform my practice to the divine precepts of the gospel ; for I have lately complied with our blessed Saviour's dying command.

Under divine influence, your writings have been powerfully efficacious in dissipating the gloom of scepticism, in which I was once so involved. But plain and unlearned as I am, gratitude must supersede encomium. I, however, sincerely pray,

that you may at least receive an approbation the most significant, "Well done, enter into the joy of your Lord," when, in the noble language of scripture, "they who have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

I have the honor to be, &c.

* * * * *

SUICIDE.

A few years ago an officer went into Hyde Park with an intention of shooting himself: he applied a pistol to his forehead, but the priming flashed and no discharge followed. A man of poor appearance, whom the officer had not observed, or perhaps thought unworthy of his notice, instantly ran up, and wrested the pistol from his hands. The other drew his sword, and was about to stab his deliverer, who with much spirit replied, "Stab me, Sir, if you think proper. I fear death as little as you, but I have more courage. More than twenty years I have lived in affliction and penury, and I yet trust in God for mercy and support." The officer was struck (as well he might be) with these reproofing words, continued speechless and motionless for a short time, and then bursting into tears, gave his purse to the honest man. He then inquired into his story, and became his private friend and benefactor; but under a solemn injunction, that he would never make any inquiries concerning himself, or seem to know him, if chance should ever bring them again in sight of each other. How many suicides might be prevented, and how many miseries relieved, if men under the pressure of their adversity would learn from this poor man to "trust in God for comfort and support."*

LINES TO A CHILD

ON HIS VOYAGE TO FRANCE, TO MEET HIS FATHER.

Lo, how impatiently upon the tide
The proud ship tosses, eager to be free.
Her flag streams wildly, and her fluttering sails
Pant to be on their flight. A few hours more,
And she will move in stately grandeur on,
Cleaving her path majestic through the flood,
As if some living goddess of the deep.

* Moore's Enquiry into Suicide.

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O, 'tis a thought sublime, that man can force
 A path upon the waste, can find a way
 Where all is trackless, and compel the winds,
 Those freest agents of Almighty power,
 To lend their untamed wings, and bear him on
 To distant climes. Thou, William, still art young
 And dost not see the wonder. Thou wilt tread
 The buoyant deck, and look upon the flood,
 Unconscious of the high sublimity,
 As 'twere a common thing—thy soul unawed,
 Thy childish sports unchecked: while thinking *man*
 Shrinks back into himself—himself so mean
 'Mid things so vast,—and, wrapt in deepest awe,
 Bends to the might of that mysterious Power,
 Who holds the waters in his hand, and guides
 The ungovernable winds.—'Tis not in man
 To look unmoved upon that heaving waste,
 Which, from horizon to horizon spread,
 Meets the o'er arching heavens on every side,
 Blending their hues in distant faintness there.

'Tis wonderful!—and yet, my boy, just such
 Is life. Life is a sea as fathomless,
 As wide, as terrible, and yet sometimes
 As calm and beautiful. The light of Heaven
 Smiles on it, and 'tis decked with every hue
 Of glory and of joy: Anon, dark clouds
 Arise, contending winds of fate go forth,
 And hope sits weeping o'er a general wreck.

And thou must sail upon this sea, a long
 Eventful voyage. The wise *may* suffer wreck,
 The foolish *must*. O then be early wise!
 Learn from the mariner his skilful art
 To ride upon the waves, and catch the breeze,
 And dare the threatening storm, and trace a path
 'Mid countless dangers, to the destined port
 Unerringly secure. O learn from him
 To station quick eyed Prudence at the helm,
 To guard thy sail from Passion's sudden blasts,
 And make firm Principle thy magnet guide,
 Which points forever with the light of Heaven.

Farewell—Heaven smile propitious on thy course,
 And favoring breezes waft thee to the arms
 Of love paternal.—Yes, and more than this—
 Blest be thy passage o'er the changing sea
 Of life; the clouds be few that intercept
 The light of joy; the waves roll gently on
 Beneath thy bark of hope, and bear thee safe
 To meet in peace thine other Father,—Gop,

June, 4, 1818.

REVIEW.

ARTICLE XIV.

Moral Sketches of prevailing Opinions and Manners foreign and domestic : with Reflections on Prayer. By HANNAH MORE. From the London Edition. Boston : Wells and Lilly. 12mo. pp. 208.*

It is impossible to take up a book written by this distinguished woman without feelings of great respect. She has been devoting her time and talents during a long life to the religious improvement of her fellow christians. She has laboured assiduously from first to last for this one great object. She has striven to be not merely innocent in her occupations, but useful ; she has not thought it enough, to do no harm by the books she has sent out into the world, but has conscientiously attempted by all of them to do good. The high praise is her's, of having uniformly intended the best. This none can doubt, however some may question the real value of her writings.— And she has her reward, in still being, in a good old age, one of the most admired and popular of religious writers. It is no small reward to be able to look back from the close of a long pilgrimage, and see its whole course marked with praiseworthy efforts in the cause of religion ; to know that many have received from her, not in vain, admonition, counsel and comfort ; that she has helped to correct and form many characters ; and aided in staying the stream of corruption that was deluging society, and in upholding the firm barrier of religious principle ;—to see, too, that her labors are not forgotten nor slighted, but are every where acknowledged with the full meed of praise and veneration.

We have much of this feeling ourselves. We highly appreciate her services ; we admire the apparent depth and ardor of her piety ; we respect one who maintains so rigid a system of christian morals, and pleads so strongly for *consistency* in faith and practice. But we cannot avoid thinking, notwithstanding, that her merits have been greatly exaggerated, and

* Wells & Lilly have also published a superior edition in two small volumes, 18mo.

that the encomiums lavished upon her have oftentimes been extravagant. There is a great deal of fashion, even in religion; and when one has been set up as a saint and an oracle, every one calls him so without knowing or inquiring why. It is not to be suspected, no, not for a moment, that he has any faults. In the present case, something is perhaps to be attributed to the sex of the author. Something of her popularity may be owing, too, to the popularity of the system she is known to support,—for we all love to read those, whom we know to be right because they agree with us. Much has been owing to the very severity and rigidity of her principles; for men are ready to affix a notion of something almost supernatural to any extraordinary sanctity. And not a little is to be attributed to qualities in her style of writing, which are striking and dazzling, though not altogether in good taste;—to her imposing emphasis and occasional bombast; her perpetual sententiousness, and love of antithesis. No one will understand us to say, that these circumstances affect the *moral merits* of her works; but we are quite certain that they have insensibly operated to increase their worth in the estimation of many.

As we shall probably never have another opportunity, we must be permitted now to speak more largely, than we should otherwise do, of the general defects and merits of one, who has so much attracted the attention of the religious public. With respect, then, to her faults as a writer, they are so great, that we hazard little in saying, that she cannot be permanently popular. They are sustained now by personal associations with her name and character and connexions, vivid in the minds of this generation, but which must be lost in the next,—and with them will be lost the charm of her eloquence and the power of her remonstrances. With them will be removed the veil which has concealed her imperfections, and she will be forgotten. This age owes her much—the next must owe the same to another. All will perceive then, what many complain of now, that her arrangement in the treatment of subjects is so entangled and obscure, that the memory can bring away little; oftentimes, in fact, she has nothing of method. What she herself says of a particular chapter in the work before us, is equally true of her writings in general. “It consists rather of miscellaneous observations on a variety of topics, than in an attempt at a systematic view of religion or morals.” Her essays frequently present no *train* of thought at all; the reader is not conscious of any progress; he is led about and about through a wilderness of fine sentences, and sparkling thoughts, and striking appeals, and when he comes to the end, can neither

tell where he has been wandering, nor show any thing which he has brought away. However much she may have impressed us while we were reading, there is no author of whom we remember less. Then, she is too much given to writing for effect; she is all the time striving to make an impression. We acknowledge she sometimes admirably succeeds; but the attempt is too apparent; we see that she meant to strike, to dazzle, to overwhelm; and we become wearied by the appearance of unintermitted effort. She is extravagantly fond of figurative writing; she sometimes obscures the sense by an ill judged metaphor, where plain talking would have been better; and sometimes utterly disconcerts us by a mixture of the figurative and the literal. Indeed she has less than could be wished of that simplicity, which is so necessary in the serious matters of religion, and which is one of the principal things that give so much power to Law's Serious Call.—She is too fond of bringing every thing to a point; she is “ambitiously sententious;” she would have every other sentence a proverb. She is in love with assertions that sound like paradoxes; and is perpetually stringing together antitheses, one after another; in the last of which, that crowns the climax, she is sometimes obliged to use strange words for which the reader must consult his dictionary. In a word, we think her faults in prose are very much the same with those of Young in poetry; and her excellencies too. They have both the same strain of deep, and solemn, and affecting feeling; the same rich fund of fine imposing and striking thought; and the same rage for antithesis, and point, and happy turns of expression that shall startle you like an epigram.

But enough of her faults; especially as they refer so much to the mere manner. We did not know how to omit the notice of them, and are glad to dismiss them. Examples of them may be readily found by those who think it worth while to look for them; to adduce them here would be to encumber our few pages to no profit. We have higher objects than this sort of criticism; though we were willing to give one moment to it, that we might explain how it is that so many serious people of cultivated minds and taste take no pleasure in the works of so popular a writer. Having accomplished this, we shall reserve what we may have to say concerning faults of sentiment, till we speak particularly of the work before us. They are such as are little likely to injure in any way those who can read her pages with interest. She confines herself almost exclusively to practical Christianity, to vital and experimental religion, which rests on those large principles which are common to believers of every name. She has little hostility to any errors,

but those which lie in a bad heart, and little zeal for any truth, that is not manifested to be truth by its good influence over the conscience, the dispositions, and the life.

We pass gladly therefore to subjects of praise. And—to finish at once all that we have to say about her manner of communicating thought—some of her excellencies are those of style. She has a peculiar felicity of expression when a bold and powerful statement is to be made to stand out from the page. She can be very forcible and pointed and pungent. She excels in hitting off a character at a single stroke, and drawing a full description in few words.

She oftentimes describes classes of men with very great felicity: telling their imperfections and displaying their inconsistencies with unsparing hand, and thus administering, in fine satire, the most wholesome admonition and reproof. In the volume before us is the following sketch of a certain class, whom she very aptly calls *the Phraseologists*.

“These are persons who, professing to believe the whole of the Gospel, seem to regard only one half of it. They stand quite in opposition to the useful and laborious class whom we last considered. None will accuse these of that virtuous excess, of that unwearied endeavour to promote the good of others, on which we there animadverted. These are assiduous hearers, but indifferent doers; very valiant talkers for the truth, but remiss workers. They are more addicted to hear sermons, than to profit by them.

“Their religion consists more in a sort of spiritual gossiping, than in holiness of life. They diligently look out after the faults of others, but are rather lenient to their own. They accuse of being legal, those who act more in the service of Christianity, and dispute less about certain opinions. They overlook essentials, and debate rather fiercely on, at best, doubtful points of doctrine; and form their judgment of the piety of others, rather from their warmth in controversy, than in their walking humbly with God.

“They always exhibit in their conversation the idiom of a party, and are apt to suspect the sincerity of those whose higher breeding, and more correct habits, discover a better taste. Delicacy with them, is want of zeal; prudent reserve, want of earnestness; sentiments of piety, conveyed in other words than are found in their vocabulary, are suspected of error. They make no allowance for the difference of education, habits, and society: all must have one standard of language, and that standard is their own.

“Even if, on some points, you hold nearly the same sentiments, it will not save your credit; if you do not express them in the same language, you are in danger of having your principles suspected. By your deficiency or declension in this dialect, and not by the greater or less devotedness of your heart, the increasing or diminishing consistency in your practice, they take the gauge of your religion, and determine the rise and fall of your spiritual thermometer. The language of these technical Christians indisposes persons of refinement, who have not had the advantage of seeing religion under a more engaging form, to serious piety, by leading them to make a most unjust association between religion and bad taste.

"When they encounter a new acquaintance of their own school, these reciprocal signs of religious intelligence produce an instantaneous sisterhood; and they will run the chance of what the character of the stranger may prove to be, if she speaks in the vernacular tongue. With them, words are not only the signs of things, but things themselves.

"If the phraseologists meet with a well-disposed young person, whose opportunities are slender, and to whom religion is new, they alarm her by the impetuosity of their questions. They do not examine if her principles are sound, but "does she pray extempore?" This alarms her, if her too recent knowledge of her Bible and herself has not yet enabled her to make this desirable proficiency. "Will she tell her experience?" These interrogations are made without regard to that humility which may make her afraid to appear better than she is, and to that modesty which restrains a loud expression of her feelings. She does not, perhaps, even know the meaning of the term, in their acceptance of it.

"Do we then ridicule experimental religion? Do we think lightly of that interior power of Divine grace upon the heart, which is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity? God forbid! But surely we may disapprove the treating it with flippancy and unhallowed familiarity; we may disapprove of their discussing it with as little reserve and seriousness, as if they were speaking of the state of the weather, or of the hour of the day; we may object to certain equivocal feelings being made the sole criterion of religion—feelings to which those who have them not may pretend,—which those who have them may fear to communicate, before they have acquired a strength and permanency which may make them more decisive; we may blame such injudicious questions to incipient Christians, who barely know the first elements of Christianity."—pp. 127—130.

As this is an example of her judicious observation of *character*, so others might be brought to show her intimate knowledge of the *heart*. She is peculiarly fitted by this knowledge for the kind of writing to which she has devoted herself—the great object of which is to lay open men's bosoms and shew them to themselves, that they may see the necessity of a system of strict watchfulness. She appears to have made the human heart her study; she has minutely acquainted herself with its variety of operations, its use of motives, its secret biases, its slippery evasions, and is able to follow them all up till she detects and exposes them. She has a perfect understanding of the multifarious equivocations of conscience respecting duty, and a curious skill in anticipating and defeating the excuses which will be brought by the unwilling, the indolent, and the slaves of habit. To use a phrase that is well understood, she is very close and searching; she gets the soul, as it were, into her power, and she pursues it through every shifting and turning in its attempt to escape, as perseveringly as it is represented to be pursued by Death, in Blair's poem of *the Grave*:

the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,

Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain—

the foe

Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on.

In connexion with this feature in her character as a writer, may be mentioned her very rigid principles of morals, and her exalted, unbending notions of the standard of christian excellence. Few place so high the requisitions of duty, or allow so little to the excuses of Christians for their imperfections, and their compliances with the customs of the world, and the inconsistency of their practice with their faith, or of one part of their practice with another. She does not admit any degree of indulgence, which is merely indulgence; and insists, strenuously and decidedly, that nothing is to determine a Christian to act except the certain conviction—the well grounded and intelligent, not the careless conviction,—that it is right, that it is the will of God. Nothing is to be done, which will not bear to be examined by this principle. It will not do to compromise; it will not do to hesitate; whatever is not unquestionably right, is unquestionably wrong and sinful. It is not remarkable that one should say this; but it is a little remarkable that one should in all cases rigidly and consistently adhere to it. Others state such a principle in the abstract; but do not strictly abide by it; in its application they permit a thousand deviations; and so explain it away as to pronounce many things innocent, which, actually tried by this principle, would not be innocent; and, indeed, might perhaps be amongst the first to laugh at the scrupulosity of one, who should fetter himself by it in his whole conduct. But in Mrs. More there is no such deviation; she brings all her remarks, rules, and illustrations upon every subject to this point; she never loses sight of it; and there is, of consequence, a rigid severity every where in her moral requisitions. She demands of the disciples of Jesus a blamelessness of life, an elevation of motive, a spirituality of heart, which are so rarely attained, that many regard them as fanciful; as wearing the air of romance; and hence was the saying of some one, that “her *Practical Piety* contains more piety than can be practised.” But we are persuaded that by this means she affects many others, who would be little affected by the representation of excellence more immediately within their reach; she excites in them ardor of pursuit; creates lofty ideas of the holiness which is possible; and gives an air of meanness and insufficiency to moderate attainments. Many are captivated by excellence when painted as a thing so

extraordinary ; they are emulous of greater things, because greater things are showed them ; and become discontented with a low state of religious attainment, just as the ambitious in letters or in arts, whose imaginations have been inflamed with the idea of some infinite and unlimited excellence, become dissatisfied with all inferior rank, and press on to that indefinite and invisible resting place.

We are especially convinced, that such strong representations of the strictness of christian perfection are important to those, who are first interested in religious things, and just commencing their christian pilgrimage. There appears to be little reason for fearing, that injury may be done them by *over statements* upon this point. The operation of a man's common sense, in this age when common sense is permitted to operate, will prevent it. And the experience in life, which is gained by a little intercourse with men, will soon cause all extravagance to settle down into a sober state of rational and fervent piety. We do, therefore, conceive it to be of the utmost importance, that the standard should be set very high at first. The first impressions of religion on the mind should be exceedingly severe and solemn. If they be not so then, when the heart is most susceptible, the conscience most tender, and the desire of doing all that can be done most powerful ; it is to be feared that afterward, when the early ardor is cooled, and the emulation of the novice passed away—the notions of duty will become loose and confused, the impressions of responsibility weakened, and the standard of attainment low. Many there are, satisfied to be stationary in great imperfection, because they were never made to be in love with perfection. We therefore do not think it possible to do too much to impress the young Christian with a strong feeling of the vastness of the height he has to climb, and to give birth within him to an earnest and determined desire to arrive at its summit. It is better that he should feel too much than too little. The enthusiasm of the young convert always cools with time, and soberer views occupy him. And if his first views were but *just sufficiently sober*, they will never be very animated and may be very feeble. It is hardly possible they should increase, but very probable that they will decrease.

Our author's strict notions of consistency and perfection in duty, are united with equally high sentiments respecting the piety which is due to God, and the spirit of devotion in which the mind of man should always be maintained. The duty of prayer is, with her, the first and crowning duty ; that which prompts all the rest, and sanctifies all the rest, and without which the rest are

altogether insufficient. The connexion of the soul with its Maker is so necessary, so near, and so sacred, that nothing can be done by a Christian without the recollection of it; and no act of the mind, no motive of the conduct, can be in any proper sense *Christian*, which is not hallowed and directed by the principle of piety,—by the appeal to God. Half of the present work treats upon this subject, and topics connected with it. In her other works it is frequently treated; and perhaps she has not written a chapter upon any religious subject, in which it is not recognized and acknowledged—certainly, implied—as the one thing needful.

In her representations, however, of the strictness of christian duty, we have been often sensible of a faultiness, which we do not know how to express in other words than by saying, they are indefinite, vague, somewhat mystical. The impressions she leaves are not always sufficiently distinct. She gives you a feeling of awe, and urges you, with a solemnity that makes you tremble, to do something—but does not tell you, in so many words, what it is. She oftentimes writes thus, paragraph after paragraph, leaving upon your imagination nothing more than a general and confused idea of some tremendous responsibility. In practical writings this is surely a great fault. So far as regards the *practice* of religion, there is certainly little worth in that which you cannot define—which cannot be made palpable; for it amounts to nothing more than a certain solemnity of feeling, which is not necessarily followed by action, and may exist in a very bad man. You cannot be too plain, direct, explicit in every thing which relates to practical piety, and christian morals; duty should be so defined and laid before men that they cannot evade or equivocate. And after all, the great difficulty lies in the performance of plain direct precepts. He is not really the strictest Christian, who loves to be touched by eloquent appeals to his conscience, and to have his heart wrung, and his emotions excited; but he, who never swerves in his conduct from rigid principle, and who is never drawn aside by temptations from exact adherence to the rules, which are well defined, and of no uncertain interpretation.

The work now before us, in which the author takes “her final leave of her readers,” is strongly marked by the characteristics which we have mentioned, but is not equal in merit to some of the efforts of her younger days. The portion of the volume, which is entitled *Moral Sketches*, is partly occupied in bewailing the demoralizing consequences of that frequent intercourse between the Continent and England, and especially of that intimacy with the society of Paris, which has followed the gene-

ral peace in Europe. She expresses herself upon this point with great energy of feeling, and with most solemn forebodings of the religious and moral evils, which must flow from this unholy familiarity of the sons of God with the daughters of men. She fears much, and the cry of her fear is eloquent. The other part of the 'Sketches' is occupied with equally earnest expostulations respecting the secession which has recently taken place from the established Church, and the multifarious religious evils, which, in her opinion, have arisen out of it.— These topics are principally of local interest; but they compose by far the finest part of the work, and even in this country may be read with pleasure and improvement. Some of the chapters, indeed, under these heads, are of universal application, and may be equally valuable to Christians of every nation and church. Such, for example, is the following passage; which we quote from a chapter on *Soundness in judgment*, as a specimen of her good sense when she is least ambitious to be fine.

"There is one thing we would more particularly press on the important class we are now taking the liberty to address; *it is the cultivation of a sound judgment*. Of all persons, religious persons are most bound to cultivate this precious faculty."

"Judgment is to the faculties of the mind, what charity is to the virtues of the heart; as without charity the latter are of little worth, so without judgment talents are of little comparative use."

"Judgment is so far from being a cooler of zeal, as some suppose, that it increases its effect by directing its movements; and a warm heart will always produce more extensive, because more lasting good, when conducted by a cool head.

"We speak of this attribute the more positively, because it is one which, more than many others, depends on ourselves. A sound judgment, indeed, is equally bestowed with other blessings by Him from whom cometh every good gift; yet it is not, like the other faculties of the mind, so much born with us, as improved by us. By teaching us to discern the faults of others, it warns us to avoid them; by detecting our own, it leads to their cure. The deepest humility is generally connected with the soundest judgment. The judicious Christian is watchful against speculative errors, as well as against errors in conduct. He never adopts any opinion because it is new, nor any practice because it is fashionable; neither does he, if it be innocent reject the latter merely for that reason. Judgment is, in short, that quality of the mind which requires to be kept in ever wakeful activity; and the advantages it procures us, and the evils from which it preserves us, will be more apparent, the more it is kept in exercise.

"Religious charity more especially demands the full exercise of the judgment. A judicious Christian will double the good done, by his selection of the object, and his manner of relieving it. All things that are good are not equally good. A sound judgment discriminates between the value of the claimants which present themselves, and bestows on them more or less attention, according to their respective claims.

"Above all, an enlightened judgment will enable you to attain and to preserve consistency, that infallible criterion of a highly finished Christian character, the want of which makes some really religious persons not a

little vulnerable. It was this want in some of his people, which led an eminent divine, at once a man of deep piety and lively wit, to say, that "there were some good persons, with whom it would be time enough to be acquainted in heaven." So much to be regretted is it, that goodness of intention is not always attended by propriety in the execution.

"In another class, the want of consistency makes not a few appear over scrupulous as to some minor points, and lax in others of more importance. These incongruities not only bring the individual into discredit, but religion into disgrace. When the world sees persons, whose views are far from high, act more consistently with *their* avowed views, and frequently more above them, than some whose religion professes to be of a loftier standard, they will prefer the lower, as exhibiting fewer discrepancies, and less obvious contradictions.

"In the more advanced Christian, religion may seem to be less prominent in parts of the character, because it is infused into the whole. Like the life-blood, its vital power pervades the entire system: not an action of the life that is not governed by it; not a quality of the mind which does not partake of its spirit. It is diffused through the whole conduct, and sheds its benign influence, not only on the things done, but on the temper of the doer in performing them. The affections now have other objects, the time other duties, the thoughts other employments. There will be more exertion, but with less display; less show, because the principle is become more interior; it will be less obtrusive, because it is more rooted and grounded. There will be more humility, because the heart will have found out its own corruptions." pp. 72—76.

The second part of this work is entitled, *Reflections on Prayer*. It has many striking expressions, and impressive paragraphs, but is less interesting as a whole than the former part. Of her sentiments on this subject a few extracts will give sufficient information.

"They, therefore, who most insist on the value of stated devotions, must never lose sight of that grand, and universal prime truth, that wherever we are, still we are in God's presence; whatever we have is His gift; whatever we hope is his promise; feelings which are commensurate with all time, all places, and limited to no particular scenes or seasons.

"There is in some, in many it is to be feared, a readiness to acknowledge this general doctrine, which mis-called natural religion teaches; but who are far from including in their system the peculiarities, the duties, the devotions of Christianity. These are decorous men of the world, who, assuming the character of philosophical liberality, value themselves on having shaken off the shackles of prejudice, superstition, and system.—They acknowledge a Creator of the universe, but it is in a vague and general way. They worship a Being, 'whose temple is all space;' that is, every where but in the human heart. They put Him as far as possible from themselves. Believing that he has no providential care of them, they feel no personal interest in Him. God and nature are with them synonymous terms. That the creation of the world was His work, they do not go the length of denying; but that its government is in His hands, is with them very problematical." p. 184.

"But too many deceive themselves, by imagining that when they have pronounced their prayer, the duty is accomplished with the task, the occult medicine being taken, the charm is to work of itself. They consider

it as a duty quite distinct and unconnected with any other. They forget that it is to produce in them a principle which is to mix with all the occurrences of the day. Prayer, though not intended as a talisman, is yet proposed as a remedy. The effect of its operation is to be seen in assisting to govern the temper, in bridling the tongue, in checking, not only calumny but levity, not only impure, but vain conversation.

"But we have a wonderful talent at deceiving ourselves. We have not a fault for which we do not find an apology. Our ingenuity on this head is inexhaustible. In matters of religion men complain that they are weak, a complaint they are not forward to urge in worldly matters. They lament that their reluctance to pray arises from being unable to do what God, in his word, expects them to do. But is not this virtual rebellion, only with a smooth face and a soft name? God is too wise not to know exactly what we *can* do, and too just to expect from us what we *cannot*." p. 204.

"But to return.—Though we must not, in accommodation to the prevailing prejudices and unnecessary zeal against abstinence and devotion, neglect the imperative duties of retirement, prayer, and meditation; yet, perhaps, as prayer makes so indispensable an article in the Christian life, some retired, contemplative persons may apprehend that it makes the whole; whereas prayer is only the operation which sets the machine going. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself. The only infallible incentive to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. It finds them work for every day in the week, as well as on Sundays.

"The praying Christian, on going into the world, feels that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will think upon thy commandments to do them.' What the Holy Spirit has so indissolubly joined, he does not separate." p. 271.

Here we take leave of our author; and, in all probability, as she has taken of her readers, a final leave. We are glad to have had this opportunity of bearing testimony to her merits, and of saying, at the same time, that her works are far from deserving unmingled approbation. We have therefore spoken of her with respect, and yet with freedom. We have attempted, and we hope not unsuccessfully, to exhibit a fair outline of her merits and her failings; we have set them side by side, without intentional exaggeration of the one, or designed concealment of the other. And when the balance is fairly struck, we think the christian world will agree with us in the opinion, that, notwithstanding her undoubted claim to the gratitude of the religious community; her reputation is not founded upon qualities that will endure, and that it will pass away when she is gone;—But the good she has done will remain, and she probably cares little for immortality on earth, if she can secure it in Heaven.

ARTICLE . XV.

Affection's Gift to a Beloved Godchild. By M. H. From the London Edition. Boston, Wells and Lilly. 1819. 16mo. pp. 148.

THIS little book contains a series of letters from a God-mother to a young woman just in the entrance of life, upon many important points of manners and morals. It is not very profound or eloquent, and we might wish perhaps that it were a little more forcible. It would be better too if fewer topics had been treated, that they might be treated more at length, and, of consequence, more instructively. But considered merely as a book of hints, designed to call back to the mind of a young person from time to time an older friend's advice; and accompanied, as such a present is supposed to be and ought to be, by the authority and influence of the friend who gives; it may be of considerable value, and do much good. Such a book is frequently wanted. We give counsel to our young friends, and strive to guide them in the regulation of their hearts and the choice of their employments. But we often wish that we had something more durable to trust to, than the words which pass our lips and are so easily forgotten. We wish that we could be sure of the advice being occasionally recalled to their thoughts. Such a book as this enables us to do it. We put it into their hands, and say to them—the instructions which impress you now, may easily be lost if you be at no pains to keep them. Take therefore this book; it is small, but it contains sufficient to refresh your memory and to revive the good purposes of your heart. Read these letters as if I had written them expressly for yourself. Here is my advice; you may always repeat to yourself what I would say, by looking here. By this book I am present with you—let it have all the influence of my presence.

The letters are twenty three in number. The general topics are, Religion, the improvement of the Mind, the regulation of the Heart and Affections, and the Accomplishments of life. A few short extracts will enable our readers to judge for themselves of the manner of the writer. The subject of Religion is dismissed much too hastily. It may be said, however, in excuse, that it is always kept in view in the treatment of other topics, and the following passage will show that it is touched with proper seriousness and correct views.

"It is this divine principle which fosters the best sensibilities of our nature, at the same time that it corrects and regulates them; which furnishes the fittest objects for their exercise, and the plainest boundaries for their limitation. Thus you perceive, my dear girl, that religion must be a *cheerful* principle; for, by regulating the passions, improving the heart, expanding the mind, and softening the disposition it *cannot but produce* that most desirable of all results, peace of soul, and a contented mind.

"Thus far I have endeavoured to enforce its importance, in reference to your *temporal* happiness. But how will that importance rise in your mind, when you reflect, that by it *alone* you can hope for that which is to be *eternal*.

"Seriously reflect, my beloved child, that before we can enjoy happiness, the mind must be prepared to receive it—that there is no transmuting power in death—that unless we habituate the soul to virtue, and to piety *here*, and endeavour to attain a relish for those enjoyments which we are promised in heaven, even *there* happiness would be unknown to us.

"The germs of the qualities which are to flourish through the endless ages of eternity, must be cultivated with constant and with tender care, during this scene of our probation.

"Let this reflection sink deep into your mind, and it will be unnecessary for me to urge the subject more. Let the study of the Holy Scriptures be your daily employment, and you cannot fail to find in them delight; but recollect, they are not to be pursued merely to be believed, and remembered, and held in *speculative* reverence; but as the grand, the only means under divine grace, of producing in your heart that awe of the Almighty, that reverence of his majesty, that delight in his infinite perfections, and of his immutable attributes, and that affectionate knowledge of him, which will, which *can* alone constitute your *rest*—your *peace*—your *strength*—your *consolation*.

There is not here the force and eloquence of Bishop Watson's "Address to young Persons"—which is probably by far the best book of this sort; but we are not to judge of its value by such a comparison, but by regarding it, as we said above, as designed to recal former advice and revive the impressions of personal admonition. By the same remark we are to judge of passages like this relating to the regulation of the heart.

"The first step towards resisting temptation, is to regulate our notions; for before we can *act* virtuously, we must learn to *think* justly. The excursions of the imagination must be checked, as its restless nature gives it a power dangerous to our virtue and our peace; it deludes us into a false estimation of things, arraying them with fascinations which produce an insatiable desire to possess them; till, as it is most justly observed, "the balance of the soul is lost." Endeavour to keep alive in your mind the sense of its bewildering nature, and suffer it not to overbear your judgment; endeavour to fix the intrinsic value of the objects it presents, and learn to estimate them aright. A habit of recurring to reflection will be one of the strongest barriers against the inroads of error; the most effectual mode of confining your irregular wishes within due bounds. By watching the first motions, you will learn to *suppress* the first risings of such wishes—you must assert the natural power of reason over the soul, and daily confirm his authority by exercising it on all occasions, however

trivial you may think them : thus will you be insensibly habituated to resist the stronger solicitations which may assail your virtue.

"But my beloved girl will find all these means ineffectual, unless she seeks for internal strength from the FORMER of the heart. Prayer is the high privilege of frail and weak beings; *that* only can calm when the tumults of thought arise within, *that* only can bid the soul be still and rest upon its God!"

And of Sensibility—which is one of the finest letters in the book.

"There are so many counterfeits of the quality which forms the subject of my present letter, and it has been in so many instances perverted from its genuine meaning, *that the term itself has been brought into disgrace*; yet it is in its simple beauty, one of the greatest ornaments of our sex, as well as the source of our most amiable virtues."

"Sensibility, as far as concerns ourselves alone, is liable to equal perversions and certainly to far superior mischiefs. It may be so misdirected and distempered as to bewilder us in the paths of error, if it does not hurry us to the precipice of guilt. It may be so refined as to render us ill calculated to meet the disappointments, to bear the coarseness and unfeeling judgments, to which our situation in life may expose us."

"Sensibility, to give worth to the character, to be the perfume which sheds its fragrance on our severer virtues, must be sustained by reason, and founded upon principle.—It is an observation of that virtuous and great man, *Necker*, that 'There must be a conductor to the electric fluid, and one is equally wanted to the ethereal flame of the imagination.' This observation is perfectly appropriate to the subject under review.

"Study therefore, my dear Girl, to obtain that command over your sensibility, that it may never rise above the pleasing participation in the joys, or the sympathy with, and the active relief of your suffering fellow beings, which I have endeavoured to enforce upon your attention; and you will assuredly feel that internal peace, a greater blessing than which I cannot wish you."

We should not do justice to the writer, if we did not quote part of the conclusion.

"The virtues I have enforced are all perfectly practicable; the employments, the accomplishments equally so, to a diligent and active mind. The Affections will prove their own reward, if with the Passions, they are vigilantly guarded. But I have not deceived you by saying, it requires no effort to be virtuous; all things worthy of attainment, both in the moral and natural world, must be won by attention and diligence

"I have made religion the basis of my plan, for futile indeed is human reason without its aid! The lessons I have learned in the school of life have been severe; may you, by reading the reflections which have resulted, be warned, without encountering the sorrow experienced by your friendly monitor."

ARTICLE XVI.

A Poem, on the pleasures and advantages of True Religion : delivered before the United Brothers' Society, in Brown University, on their Anniversary, August 31, 1819. By REV. DANIEL HUNTINGTON, A.M. Providence : 1819. pp. 24.

A POEM in the measure of Spenser, and upon a subject exclusively religious, delivered on the anniversary of a literary society, is quite a novelty. It is almost a novelty from the press; and we therefore take it up, that we may give our pages a variety which they cannot often have. We are the more ready to do this, as we are persuaded that the extracts we shall make will give pleasure to our readers. For although the poem contains no very lofty flights of imagination, nor descriptions and bursts of feeling that stir and overpower; nor is free from obvious blemishes; yet it is a pleasant, chaste, and respectable production; commendable for its easy flow of harmonious versification, and passages of occasional vigor and beauty. It is, as the title indicates, entirely religious. No digression breaks its unity or interrupts its impression. The solemn majesty of the stanza is well adapted to the seriousness of the subject. Mr. H., in spite of its difficulty, manages it with considerable felicity; except that he appears imperfectly to understand the structure of the closing line.

The introduction contains an apology, or reasons, for the choice of such a subject. We give our readers the third stanza.

III.

"Not mine the aim a vacant mind t' amuse,
And please the idle with an idle lay :
Well might the wise and fair a song refuse,
Which would but cheat their precious hours away.
Truth is the Genius of our happy day,
To her my humble off'ring let me bring,
In measure that bespeaks her sober sway,
The while a weak and trembling hand I fling
O'er Spenser's ancient lyre, with long resounding string."

The pleasures of religion, both in retirement and in action, are depicted in the following stanzas.

XIII.

"O happy hours to pure devotion giv'n,
 When, on the wings of faith, their spirits rise,
 To hold exalted intercourse with Heav'n,
 And bow before the Monarch of the skies!
 How fair, when earth's delusive vision flies,
 Yon land of promise swells in distant view;
 Where Love's full fount unfailing joy supplies,
 Where Eden's bow'rs their forfeit* sweets renew,
 And all is pure and peaceful, all sincere and true!

XIV.

Nor less the pious pleasures that attend
 His daily walk of active usefulness,
 Who, like his heav'nly Master, Man's best Friend,
 Lives but to love, and loving, lives to bless,
 Untaught each [the] gen'rous impulse to suppress,
 By worldly maxims, and by selfish fears.
 A nobler aim his kindly deeds confess:
 Heav'n's bounty with the poor he freely shares,
 And soothes the widow's grief, and dries the orphan's tears.

XV.

Sweet is the musick of a grateful voice,
 In whose soft accents grief and gladness blend;
 Where pity bids a drooping heart rejoice,
 And helpless mis'ry finds an unsought friend.
 When days are dark and gath'ring clouds impend,
 Who would not every selfish wish forego,
 To act as Heav'n's kind almoner, and send
 Those comforts which the sad alone can know,
 And calm the swelling breast, and hush the voice of wo?"

The description of the religious cottage may be read with pleasure.

XXVI.

"Seest thou yon lonely cottage in the grove—
 With little garden neatly plan'd before—
 Its roof, deep shaded by the elms above,
 Moss-grown and deck'd with velvet verdure o'er?
 Go lift the willing latch—the scene explore—
 Sweet peace, and love, and joy, thou there shalt find:
 For there Religion dwells; whose sacred lore
 Leaves the proud wisdom of the world behind,
 And pours a heav'nly ray on every humble mind.

XXVII.

When the bright morning gilds the eastern skies,
 Up springs the peasant from his calm repose;

* ————— "flowers of Paradise,
 "As yet *unforfeit*." ————— YOUNG.

Forth to his honest toil he cheerful hies,
 And tastes the sweets of nature as he goes—
 But first, of Sharon's fairest, sweetest Rose,
 He breathes the fragrance, and pours forth the praise :
 Looks to the source whence ev'ry blessing flows,
 Ponders the page which heav'nly truth conveys,
 And to its author's hand commits his future ways.

XXVIII.

Nor yet in solitude his prayers ascend ;
 His faithful partner and their blooming train,
 The precious word with rev'rent minds attend,
 The Heav'n-directed path of life to gain.
 Their voices mingle in the grateful strain—
 The lay of love and joy together sing,
 To Him whose bounty clothes the smiling plain,
 Who spreads the beauties of the blooming spring,
 And tunes the warbling throats that make the vallies ring."

These extracts sufficiently show the unaffected and unambitious character of the poem ; which is not to be noticed as making pretensions to uncommon display of splendid genius ; but simply as an exhibition of religious truths in an engaging form ;—which leads us to regret, that we do not meet with more publications of the same kind.

 INTELLIGENCE.

EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

THIS Society was formed in 1807. It was originally confined to the counties of Worcester and Middlesex. Its purpose was to provide the destitute inhabitants of our own country with the means of Christian instruction and moral improvement. Its means were furnished by the annual subscription of its members, the contributions of particular Churches, the donations of a number of Female Cent Societies, and by specific sums given by pious and charitable individuals. To secure the permanent existence of the society, and provide a source for an emergency, \$1000 were early funded, and the interest has annually been added to the principal.

The design of the institution was to be accomplished by the employment of Missionaries and School masters, and by the

distribution of religious and moral publications, school books, &c.* The Trustees commenced their official duties in the conviction, that the utility of charitable Societies depends on the manner in which their purposes are carried into execution, and they adopted their plan on the result of serious deliberation. They supposed, that the ordinary effects of Christianity are to be expected from the stated ministrations of the gospel. In assigning, therefore, the services of their Missionaries, they did not embrace a large district of country and thereby induce the inhabitants of a number of towns to depend merely on occasional preaching; but they selected suitable places, and to these confined the labours of those whom they employed; and they authorized their Missionaries to assure the people, who attended on their ministrations, and who manifested a disposition to maintain the public institutions of our religion, that the Society would aid them in gathering a Church, and supporting a minister. This aid was given in the hope that a Christian society thus assisted, realizing the benefits resulting from the regular administrations of the word and ordinances, would become more united among themselves, and more able and willing to bear the expence of a preached gospel.—The Trustees indulged the expectation, that, by Divine blessing, they might be instrumental in gathering regular Churches, and establishing evangelical ministers in succession among people, who without their assistance must long have been destitute of these blessings. In granting aid to schools, it was the aim of the Trustees to impress the minds of the people of our new settlements, with a just sense of the importance of the literary and Christian education of their children, and to hold up the prospect of assistance to those, who were disposed to make proper exertions for themselves.

In pursuance of this system of measures, the Trustees sought for Missionaries of established reputation, and of a catholic spirit, who in their preaching would dwell on the fundamental doctrines of revelation, and on the unchangeable duties of the Christian character. Several individuals of this description were sent into different places in the District of Maine. These were received with respect; their ministrations attended upon with apparent seriousness, and the warm expressions of gratitude, which were returned, led the Society to believe that good was produced; but for the want of union among the people themselves, no permanent settlement of a minister was effected.

* It has also a committee to receive and appropriate such monies as shall be contributed in aid of foreign missions.

The Town of Ellsworth, and the Plantations of Jackson and Washington, gave a brighter illustration of the advantages of the Evangelical Missionary Society. By the representations of Mr. Brewer, who first preached at Ellsworth, and at the earnest request of that people, the Trustees were induced to make that place the object of particular attention. In 1810, Mr. Peter Nurse, a candidate for the ministry, engaged in a mission to Ellsworth; and at the solicitations of that people, he united the business of a school master with the labours of a preacher. The beneficial effects of his assiduous application to his various duties, soon became apparent in the increasing attention to the institutions of the gospel, in the more general manifestation of the Christian spirit, and in the elevation of the tone of public morals. In his school, Mr. Nurse engaged the love and respect of his scholars; and their improvement rewarded him for his unremitted endeavours. Under his care, numbers both of males and females were educated to become instructors in English schools.

A respectable committee of the town of Ellsworth, in a letter directed to the society, observed, "As your views are disinterested, your highest reward will be to know that your endeavours to do us good are crowned with success; and the extraordinary success of Mr. Nurse's labours among us, is an indisputable test of the utility of confining the labours of one Missionary to one society or neighbourhood. It is our deliberate opinion, that Mr. Nurse has done more good the past year, than ten such Missionaries would have done travelling in the usual manner."

The people of Jackson and Washington Plantations, were assisted by the Society in the support of Mr. Silas Warren, their candidate. His faithful services in the pulpit and the school house, were attended with similar, if not equal success to those of Mr. Nurse. In 1812, the executive committee of the year, by the desire of those interested, made a journey into Maine, and assisted in gathering a Church and ordaining Mr. Nurse at Ellsworth, and Mr. Warren at Jackson. The people of Ellsworth now raised among themselves the greater portion of the salary of their minister, and by the Divine benediction, peace and prosperity continue to attend his ministerial labours.* An act of incorporation being deemed expedient, was obtained from the Legislature of the Commonwealth.

* In 1816 a house of worship was erected at the sole expence of a respectable and liberal minded parishoner, Melatiah Jordan, Esq. It is remarkable that the first services performed in it were the obsequies of the lamented founder.

The society, under the direction of their missionaries and school masters, has distributed many religious and moral publications and school books, and several thousand copies of the catechism compiled by the Worcester Association of ministers. These all were the donations of individuals.

A number of respectable gentlemen, not resident in the counties of Worcester and Middlesex, in 1816, expressed a wish that the society should be opened for the admission of all in the Commonwealth, who approve its plan, and are disposed to promote its objects. The proposal was cordially embraced, and the necessary measures adopted to carry it into effect. A branch society was the last year formed in the District of Maine.

The parent society has recently received important and substantial patronage from Boston and Salem. Thus countenanced by the pious public, and aided by the liberality of the affluent, the Society, lifting up holy hands for the blessings of Heaven, now rise to more extended views and to brighter prospects.

The recent transactions and the present state of the society will appear from the following report of the Board of Trustees, presented in October last.

REPORT.

At a season in which the Christian community is beyond example fruitful in works of benevolence, and in which the hope is raised that the season is fast approaching, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth," the Trustees join the members of the Evangelical Missionary Society in devout acknowledgments, that our Association is allowed to take a humble part in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer.

In seeking for objects most deserving of our charity, and whom upon the uniform principle of our institution, we might aid in the acquirement of Christian knowledge, we are established in the following important facts. A very large part of the newly settled territory in our country remains unfurnished with religious instructors. A field is found, to whose cultivation the combined charities of all the associations formed for the diffusion of a knowledge of the gospel, might be usefully applied. We find but few parts of this wide field which have not occasionally been visited by teachers, commissioned by some of the various classes of Christians. Their visits have been generally transient; their intercourse with the people limited; their instructions too often of a sectarian complexion.

We have, therefore, been left to deplore the disgust and division which have been excited, and the small progress which has been made on communicating consistent and reasonable ideas of the Christian religion, and in promoting the great interests of morality and piety. From the survey we have made, and from the experiment of many succeeding years, we are still more confirmed in the belief, that missionary labour can seldom promise a harvest, unless a particular portion of the vineyard is allotted for cultivation; and the teachers who are employed, in addition to an enlarged charity and habitual piety, are also proficient in general literature, and possess a good fund of theological knowledge.

We consider the instrumentality of this Society in the establishment, during the last year, of the Rev. Mr. Frothingham, at Belfast, in the District of Maine, as a signal smile of divine providence. In him we repose high confidence as a man of knowledge, a sound theologian, a pattern of Christian prudence and charity, and as one who will, by his enlightened and zealous instructions and corresponding example, shed a general lustre on pure and undefiled religion. Some of our members who aided in his installation, give the most encouraging views of the prosperity and prospects of the religious society in that place,* and they will probably stand in no farther need of our charity.

The usual appropriation of \$200, has been made to the Rev. Silas Warren, of Jackson; and the Trustees have a full persuasion of his diligence and fidelity as a minister, and of the success which has attended his endeavours to promote knowledge among the rising generation, and to advance the cause of Christ.

One hundred dollars has been paid Mr. John Barrett for service he has rendered in the vicinity of Belfast. His report gives satisfactory information, that he faithfully executed the duties of his commission, and that he addressed Christians who had a desire to be instructed in the word of life.

As an expression of our sympathy with the Rev. Seth Stetson, of Plymouth, whom we view as an independent inquirer after truth, and who has at heart the honour of the Redeemer and the best interests of his religion, we appropriate towards his support among his own people, \$50.

We have cheerfully met an earnest solicitation from respectable inhabitants of Brooklyn, in Connecticut, that we would aid them in their endeavours for the settlement of the ministry,

* See Christian Disciple, New Series, No. 4, p. 336.

and have employed Mr. David Reed to preach to them for three months.

We invite the friends of our religion to consider the present as a peculiarly favourable season for devising liberal things to spread the knowledge of Christ. Reports from various parts of our land justify the belief, that there is a rapid multiplication of friends to the truth as it is in Jesus. It should animate us to perseverance in our work, that the system we have adopted meets general approbation, and that the ministers we have ordained and the churches we have established, may be referred to as fruits of our labours. We entreat all who are charitable to give us the means of doing still more extensive good, and to join with us in a humble prayer that Christian truth, charity, and righteousness may prevail.

Statement of the Funds of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Massachusetts, Dec. 1, 1819.

Amount of the accumulating fund	-	-	-	\$1418	52
Balance in the Treasury for appropriation	-	-	-	360	35
Balance in the hands of the Vice-Treasurer	-	-	-	56	53

A considerable legacy of the late Miss Russell, of Charlestown, the amount of which is not certainly ascertained, is added to the fund.

List of Donations in 1818.

From the Female Cent Society in the second parish in Marlborough	-	-	-	-	\$14	50
From the Cent Society in Concord	-	-	-	-	6	15
From do. do. in Shrewsbury	-	-	-	-	10	
From do. do. in Waltham	-	-	-	-	15	52
From do. do. in Lancaster	-	-	-	-	23	41
From do. do. in Northborough	-	-	-	-	17	
From Ladies of West Church Society, Boston	-	-	-	-	62	
From Houlton plantation, Maine	-	-	-	-	30	
From a Lady in Brighton	-	-	-	-	2	

List of Donations in 1819.

From the young Misses of the North Church Society, Salem	-	-	-	-	\$50	
From Ichabod Tucker, Esq.	-	-	-	-	5	
From the Female Cent Society in Shrewsbury	-	-	-	-	15	
A Friend	-	-	-	-	1	
A Friend	-	-	-	-	1	
Ladies Cent Society Concord	-	-	-	-	14	13

A Lady in Brighton	-	-	-	\$5
Ladies' Cent Society in Waltham	-	-	-	7 65

Officers of the Society.

HON. ISAAC PARKER, L.L.D. *President.*
 REV. EZRA RIPLEY, D.D. *Vice-President.*
 REV. SAMUEL RIPLEY, *Cor. & Rec. Secretary.*
 DEACON JOSIAH BRIDGE, *Treasurer.*
 REV. FRANCIS PARKMAN, *Vice-Treasurer.*
 ICHABOD TUCKER, Esq. *Assistant Treas. for Essex.*

Trustees.

Rev. Aaron Bancroft, D.D.	Rev. Isaac Allen,
Hon. Joseph Allen,	Stephen Higginson, Jr. Esq.
Rev. John Foster, D.D.	Rev. Charles Lowell,
Deacon John White,	Ichabod Tucker, Esq.
Rev. Nathl. Thayer, D.D.	Rev. James Kendall,
Deacon Moses Coolidge,	Alden Bradford, Esq.

Standing Committee for Foreign Missions, &c.

Rev. John Foster, D.D.	Professor Sydney Willard,
Rev. John Pierce,	Samuel Parkman, Esq.
Rev. Charles Lowell,	Rev. Mr. Channing.
Rev. A. Bancroft, D.D.	

Executive Committee.

Rev. Charles Lowell,	Nathaniel Thayer, D.D.
Stephen Higginson, Jr. Esq.	Alden Bradford, Esq.
Rev. Samuel Ripley,	

The next annual meeting of the Society will be holden in Boston, on the first Thursday in October, 1820, and the religious exercises will be performed in the West Church. First preacher, Rev. Abiel Abbot, of Beverly; second preacher, Rev. Mr. Channing.

Conversion of the Jews.—The London Society for promoting christianity among the Jews has existed eleven years.
New Series—vol. I. 61

During the last year there was considerable discussion in England, respecting the good effected or likely to be effected by its exertions. Some account of the publications on this subject may be found in the British Critic, from which the following abstract has been made.

The London Society has expended in ten years about 95,000*l.*, and its receipts during the last year amounted to 10,091*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* If we inquire what these ample funds have enabled the Society to perform towards the promotion of its object, we shall be informed by its various reports, that it has opened a Meeting-house for the benefit of those Jews who might be converted, or appeared well disposed for conversion; that it has built an Episcopal Chapel, on Bethnal Green, for the accommodation of those converts, who might prefer the ministrations of the Church of England; that it has established schools in which there are at present 43 boys and 35 girls; and that it has printed an edition of the New Testament in Hebrew. We learn, however, from the same sources of information, that the Meeting-house is shut up, and to be disposed of, as the conversions produced by this Society are henceforth to be conducted on the principles of the Church of England; the society itself having, as it appears, fallen entirely, or in a great measure, under the control of those who style themselves "the Evangelical Party" in the Church. The Episcopal Chapel, on Bethnal Green, continues open, and is, we are informed, well attended; not however by Jews, or by the converts of the Society, who might probably be accommodated within a single pew in any Church,—but by those Christians who usually resort to the Chapels in which an Evangelical clergyman officiates. The schools do not appear to be confined to the children of Jewish parents; not a few others have found admission there; and as for the Hebrew Testament, it would probably have remained as lumber in the ware-room of the Society's printer, had not the Bible Society taken the greater part of the impression *at less than the cost price*; (10th Report, p. 24, 26.*) and the Rev. L. Way and his associates

* We find, by examining this Report, that another and corrected edition is preparing in Stereotype, and that the Society have met with some circumstances of encouragement as well as discouragement. The following anecdote is given: A Polish Jew, residing in this country, but not able to read the English language, was, under God, converted to the faith of Christ by reading the Gospels in the Hebrew tongue, which had been put into his hands by this Society. He made a public profession of his faith by baptism at the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, on the 20th of August last. His conduct since that time has been such as to afford the best hope of his sincerity.

undertaken to distribute a portion of what was left, in their foreign tour. (Report p. 29.)

The Society does not boast much of its success in making converts. Some nominal converts have, however, been made, but the Rev. Author of "a Letter addressed to the Bishop of St. David's," has, we understand, found to his cost, that a converted Jew gains no very clear ideas of Christian honesty by the process; having not only detected these hopeful children in levying contributions upon his silver spoons and such light articles; but having been robbed of the communion plate and surplices of his Church, by the convert who had been appointed to the office of Clerk; and having reason to suspect the same person of a forgery upon his banker to the amount of some hundred pounds.

It is said that the letter of Mr. Way, one of the most zealous friends of the Society, contains admissions of its errors and failures; and he draws the same inferences of its being an object of peculiar Divine favour from its *adversity*, which are deduced in regard to the Bible Society from its *prosperity*. This adversity appears to have been owing to strange mismanagement, and not a little to the too great inference of a well known individual, C. F. Frey. While under his auspices, impostors without number were suffered to prey upon the Society; the most shameful immoralities were practised by its pretended converts; the association itself was disgraced, its income was wasted, the royal patronage which had been obtained, withheld, the public interest lost, and the more respectable Jews insulted, and confirmed in their own faith by the misconduct of those who had undertaken to convert them. Thus in seven years 70,000*l.* were expended, the Society was on the verge of bankruptcy, and a radical change became necessary. The management of affairs was transferred from the Dissenters to members of the Episcopal Church, but the change was more nominal than real; it was sometime before even Frey was dismissed, and the general course of measures was but little changed. With respect to the instruments they have employed, it is astonishing how unfortunate or careless they have been in the selection. The immoralities of one are stated to have driven him from the country; another is reported to have been arrested on the charge of forgery, and strongly suspected of sacrilege; a third, the most prominent and active, appears to have deserted his original benefactors, and is charged with having quitted England at last, because detection in practices disgraceful to his moral character rendered his further residence here, or employment by the Society,

impossible. And the fourth is regarded even by his friends with an eye of diffidence.

If we proceed to investigate the conduct of the presumed or pretended converts, the picture will be too disgusting to look upon. If the hitherto uncontradicted narrative of Mr. Goakman be not exaggerated, grievous indeed has been the misapplication of public liberality, and gross the deception of those by whom it has been administered. Even the statements of zealous friends to the Society give little rational ground to hope that they are doing any good. We very much fear that few real Christians have been or will be made. Mr. Abrahams, we suspect, has stated the truth when, adverting to the thousands which have been expended, he says,—‘What have they bought for their money, but deception? Even those outcasts, which the temptation of money has beguiled to enlist under the banners of that Society, would be exceeding happy to return to their own congregation, if they thought they would be accepted.’

We would willingly, says the British Critic, in language we would adopt for our own—we would willingly speak with tenderness of those who have hitherto stood most prominent as the managers of the Society; for, notwithstanding we differ from them respecting the expediency of such an institution, we are always ready to give them credit for a sincere desire to do good, and for an ardent zeal in the prosecution of those designs which they consider to be praiseworthy and beneficial. In regard to the subject in general, it is one of great interest. The apostle’s declaration ‘that his heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved,’ has doubtless been echoed by the wishes of all reflecting Christians; who look forward with laudable anxiety to that predicted time, when it shall please God once more to call them to the knowledge of his truth, and the participation of his favour. It is not surprising accordingly, that many pious and learned men, in every age of the Church, have considered it their duty to attempt the promotion of this work and the hastening of this time. From the days of Justin Martyr, to those of Hoornbeck, Limborch, and Spanheim, and our own incomparable Leslie, a long list of writers might be produced, who have laboured in this well intentioned, but hitherto fruitless, work. For as if to shew that “God only knoweth the times and the seasons,” and that this is a task which he hath especially reserved for himself, the conversion of a Jew has at all times been as rare, as their whole history is wonderful; and however laudable may have been the designs of these writers, or excellent their performances,

they have been utterly unprofitable ; the veil is yet upon the heart of the Jews ; and until it shall please God to remove that judicial blindness, to which, for wise purposes, he has seen fit to condemn them, we have no reason to expect that others will succeed where they have failed.

[N.B.—This article has been in type several months, but excluded by a press of other matter. Later information has been since received, for which we may possibly find place hereafter.]

Massachusetts Peace Society.—The fourth anniversary meeting of this interesting and flourishing society was holden at Boston on the 25th of December. An address was delivered in the evening at the Old South Church, to a very numerous and attentive audience, by John Gallison, Esq. The speaker took an able and eloquent survey of the various causes, which have hitherto operated to counteract the pacific tendencies of the christian religion, and to maintain the custom of war amongst Christians notwithstanding its direct repugnance to their principles ;—and insisted upon the practicability of its final abolition.—After the address, the annual Report was read by the Rev. Noah Worcester, D.D. the corresponding secretary, which comprised a summary history of the origin and progress of the society, and a most encouraging view of its present state and future prospects. We hope, when the Report shall be published, to find room for some of its statements. The lovers of religion and of man must view with unmingled approbation the object of this Institution, and feel the most devout gratitude for the prosperity by which Providence has been thus far pleased to distinguish it.

Theological Seminary in Cambridge.—The annual visitation of the Theological School in Harvard University, took place on November 17th, in presence of a large number of its patrons and friends. The whole number of those pursuing Theological studies in their preparation for the Gospel Ministry, is 38. The following is a list of the subjects upon which exercises were exhibited :

1. The Nature of Divine Justice.
2. The character and design of the Mosaic dispensation.
3. Terms of Christian Communion.
4. The account of miracles said to have occurred when Julian attempted to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem.
5. The doctrines of Augustin concerning grace.
6. On the meaning of 1 Thess. iv. 15.
7. On the evidence from the light of nature of a future retribution.
8. On the author and character of the Book of Job.
9. The conduct and views of the Disciples of Christ before his Crucifixion and after his Ascension.

10. Character of Wakefield's Translation of the New Testament.
11. On the state of the soul immediately after death.
12. On the necessity of the study of Natural Theology.
13. On the means of discovering the Divine will, where revelation is silent.
14. On the supernatural character of our Saviour.
15. On the nature of merit.
16. On the value of the morality of the Gospel as a proof of the divine origin of Christianity.
17. On the evidence of Prophecy.

ADDRESS OF THE EDITORS.

The Editors of the *CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE*, close their labours for the year, grateful for the encouragement which they have received, and humbly trusting that they have not laboured in vain. The patronage with which the work has been favoured, has exceeded their expectations, and it affords them satisfaction to find that its circulation is constantly increasing. Animated by their past success, and by their future prospects, they will devote themselves with fresh spirit to the work, in the hope, with the blessing of God, to render it yet more acceptable and more extensively useful.

The uncommon excitement, which has existed, during the past year upon some controverted questions, has unavoidably led them to devote a larger proportion of their pages, than would have been otherwise advisable, to doctrinal discussions. They hope, in future, that there will be less occasion for this. For although they never intend to keep back their opinions on disputed points, yet they never would unnecessarily obtrude them upon these pages which should be sacredly devoted to the holier cause of pious affections and pure living. Those, therefore, who have complained that the share, which controversy has had in the numbers of the last year, has left too little room for subjects in which they feel stronger interest, will probably find less reason for the complaint in time to come.

A different complaint demands attention. It is best stated in the words of a distant correspondent, who says, "With whatever ability the work may be conducted, and however much deservedly admired at present by the higher class of readers, it is not suited to the great mass of country subscribers." The Editors will, in future, give their attention to render the work acceptable and interesting to readers of every class. And they call upon their friends and brethren at a distance, and in all parts, to lend their aid by communications or otherwise, to improve the work, and adapt it better to the wants of the community. The experience of one year, with such aid, may be expected to render the attempt of the second more successful. With new cheerfulness, therefore, anxious to serve, to the best of their abilities, the religious interests of their fellow-christians; asking of them only candor and the love of truth, and looking with humble confidence for the approbation of God; they again address themselves to the work.

END OF VOLUME I.—NEW SERIES.

